

GREATER LOWNDES 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Update 2009

Lowndes County and the Cities of Valdosta, Hahira, Lake Park, Dasher and Remerton



2.4.8 Suburban Area



DESCRIPTION: Area where typical types of suburban residential subdivision development have occurred or pressures for such type of development are greatest due to availability of water and/or sewer service. These areas are characterized by low pedestrian orientation, high to moderate building separation, predominately residential uses with scattered commercial or civic uses, and varied, often curvilinear, street patterns.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: Moderate density should be promoted in these areas with a greater focus on Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) style residential subdivisions; where possible, existing development should be retrofitted to better conform to traditional neighborhood development principles. These principles include creating neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, or well-designed small commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences.

New development should be master-planned with mixed-uses; blending residential development with schools, parks, recreation, retail businesses and services. Strong connectivity and continuity between each master planned development should exist along with internal street connectivity, multiple site access points, and good vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle connections to retail/commercial services. Street design should foster traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. Compatible architecture styles are encouraged to maintain the regional character; these should not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture. Where possible, there should be connections to regional networks of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes. The permit of accessory housing units or well-designed, small-scale infill multifamily residences will increase neighborhood and income diversity.

PERMITTED ZONINGS:	Community-Commercial (C-C)-when property located along a collector or arterial roadway.
	General Commercial (C-G) Low Density Residential (R-1)
	Medium Density Residential (R-21) and (R-15)
	Multi-Family Residential (R-6M) Multi-Family Residential (R-M)
	Neighborhood-Commercial (C-N) Office Institutional (O-I)
	Office-Professional (O-P) Planned Development (P-D)
	Residential-Professional (R-P) Single-Family Residential (R-6)

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Growth Preparedness Objective:** Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.
- 2) Infill Development Objective:** Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.
- 3) Open Space Preservation Objective:** New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.

- 4) **Transportation Alternatives Objective:** Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including accessible mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.
- 5) **Housing Opportunities Objective:** Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.
- 6) **Sense of Place Objective:** Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES:

- 1) **Appropriate Zoning Districts:**
 - a. **Low Density Residential (R-1) Zoning District:** See description above in 2.4.4
 - b. **Medium Density Residential (R-21) and (R-15) Zoning District:** See description above in 2.4.6
 - c. **Suburban Density Residential (R-10) Zoning District:** See description above in 2.4.6
 - d. **Single-Family (R-6) Residential Zoning Districts:** See description above in 2.4.6
 - e. **Multi-Family (R-6M) and (RM) Residential Zoning Districts:** See description above in 2.4.7
 - f. **Residential-Professional (R-P) Zoning District:** See description above in 2.4.7
 - g. **Office-Professional (O-P) and Office Institutional (O-I) Zoning Districts:** See description above in 2.4.7
 - h. **Neighborhood-Commercial (C-N) Zoning District:** See description above in Section 2.4.7.
 - i. **Community-Commercial (C-C) and General Commercial (C-G) Zoning Districts:** See description above in Section 2.4.5.
 - j. **Planned Developments (P-D):** See description above in 2.4.6
 - k. **Rural Planned Development (PD-R) Zoning District:** See description above in 2.4.1
- 2) **Access Control Measures:** To ensure neighborhoods and commercial properties are interconnected to allow for greater traffic circulation and increased public safety.
- 3) **Alternatives to or Reuse of Big Boxes:** As Big Boxes become vacant, developers are encouraged to investigate innovative methods of reuse and possible redesign. Developers are also encouraged to design big box retail stores so as to minimize impact on surrounding properties and provide greater aesthetic appeal. This can include the use of alternative construction materials, creative building design, and innovative site layout.
- 4) **Appropriate School Siting:** To ensure schools are located within existing or planned activity centers to promote pedestrian and bicycle accessibility.
- 5) **Density Bonuses:** Certain income groups are in need of additional housing options but may find it very hard to obtain. Increased density in appropriate areas may help decrease the cost of development thus making housing more affordable.
- 6) **Design for Pedestrian-Friendly Communities:** In an effort to promote active living, developers and planners should work together to ensure new development is designed in such a way as to encourage walking and biking. This includes such methods as interconnecting neighborhoods

and commercial developments, providing sidewalks and bike lanes, and situating buildings to promote pedestrian friendliness.

- 7) **Flexible Parking Standards:** Revising land development regulations to remove rigid parking requirements that typically result in an oversupply of unnecessary parking spaces. Revisions may include reducing the number of required parking spaces, allowing shared parking between adjacent facilities, or promoting the use of alternative materials.
- 8) **Flexible Subdivision Regulations:** Revising subdivision regulations to enable development of more innovative types of subdivisions that better match the character of the community and physical constraints of the development site. Revisions may include adjusting specific physical development standards to allow for condominium-style development or encouraging greater use of discretionary site plan review for new subdivisions.
- 9) **Inclusionary Zoning:** Refers to various zoning or subdivision regulations which require that there be some affordable units in new residential developments. This can refer to new apartments, condos, or houses. Most commonly the requirement is that a certain percentage of the units be affordable, which must be defined for a specific period of time, but other techniques are also used. An advantage of inclusionary zoning, over traditional low-income housing projects, is that it mixes incomes and classes together.
- 10) **Infill Development Program:** A comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill development in particular areas of the community, while also regulating this development to ensure protection of quality of life in affected neighborhoods. An effective program will include both: a) development incentives, improvements to public facilities and services, and streamlined regulations to encourage infill development; b) guidelines for appropriate design, density and location of new infill projects.
- 11) **Mixed Use Zoning:** In contrast to traditional zoning techniques, mixed-use zoning, which is often accomplished through zoning overlays, allows different types of uses such as: residential, commercial and office/professional to locate within the same area provided the uses are reasonably compatible. This type of development, in appropriate areas, creates a more diverse and dynamic urban setting and often makes it easier for people to carry out daily activities by alternative modes of transportation.
- 12) **Right of Way Improvements:** Any type of public improvement made in a roadway's "right-of-way," which is the strip of land that includes the road itself and the narrow band of publicly owned property on either side of the road where sidewalks, curbing, and utility lines are typically located. Such improvements may address issues such as: not enough or non-accessible sidewalks and bike trails, traffic problems, unattractive commercial or shopping areas, or unattractive sprawl development/visual clutter along roadways
- 13) **Reuse of Greyfields:** Redevelopment of Greyfields can occur through programs such as the State's Redevelopment Fund. This fund gives local governments access to flexible financial assistance to help them implement projects that cannot be undertaken with the usual public sector grant and loan programs. The Redevelopment Fund finances locally initiated public/private partnerships to leverage investments in commercial, downtown and industrial redevelopment and revitalization projects that wouldn't proceed otherwise.
- 14) **Traffic Calming:** Physical improvements designed to decrease traffic speed and increase the pedestrian-friendliness of roadways. Typical traffic-calming improvements include raised

crosswalks, narrower traffic lanes, fewer lanes, on-street parking, bump-outs, pedestrian refuges, and landscaped medians.